

# Panel absolves CIA of manipulating oil study

Washington (Reuter)—The Senate Intelligence Committee yesterday said the Central Intelligence Agency did not manipulate a study of Soviet oil production to promote President Carter's energy plan.

But the committee said the CIA erred when it released some pessimistic world oil production projections last year saying flatly that the Soviet Union would go from being self-sufficient to being a big oil importer by 1985.

CIA analysts told the committee staff that the agency made an unexplained "and a simple error" in saying without qualification that Moscow and its East European allies would be importing 3.5 million to 4.5 million of barrels of oil a day by then.

The agency said the oil import forecast

should have carried qualifying statements, such as that the Soviet Union would be required to buy foreign oil only in the unlikely event that it did not take conservation measures.

The projection became an issue when the CIA estimates were used by President Carter in public announcements backing his energy policy.

In an analysis of two CIA studies of Soviet oil needs, the committee defended the CIA and Mr. Carter against widespread criticism and allegations that the studies may have been falsified.

Two CIA reports were released in April, 1977, at the time Mr. Carter was announcing his plans for a national program to conserve oil.

The committee said in a report that staff aides traced the origin of the pessimistic Soviet oil projection and found that the CIA could have issued a similar outlook earlier.

"Committee staff has traced the origins of the new and much more pessimistic forecast back through fall, 1976, much too early to have been cooked to fit the President's recipe," the report said.

But the committee, which oversees activities of the intelligence-gathering agency, said the use of secret CIA research to build support for the President's energy plan was politically motivated.

After Mr. Carter's first disclosure of the Soviet oil situation, the studies were made public.

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